

The Portrait and Biography of Roswell Pettibone Flower - Watertown, New York

[Gov. Flower Monument](#) Restoration Project - Watertown, New York



Roswell Pettibone Flower (1835 - 1899)

Painted by Théodore Gégoux (1850-1931)
Oil on canvas, measuring approximately 34 inches by 26 inches, dated 1903 & signed T. Gégoux ([bottom center](#)).

Photo by Theodore Gégoux III © - All Rights Reserved, courtesy of Flower Memorial Library & The Jefferson County Historical Society. Painted at [Watertown](#), New York

A Biographical Sketch of Roswell P. Flower (1853 - 1899)

Excerpted from The Centennial History of Jefferson County New York - 1894
by John Haddock, Sherman & Company, Philadelphia, PA

With annotated information from other sources cited.

ROSSELL PETTIBONE FLOWER

was born August 7, 1835, at Theresa, Jefferson County, New York. He is descended from English stock, one Lamrock Flower having emigrated from that country to Connecticut.(2) His father, Nathan Monroe Flower, whose ancestors came to Connecticut in 1696 and settled in New Hartford, was born at Oak Hill, Greene County, in this State. Nathan Flower learned the wool-carding and cloth-dressing trade in his father's mill at Oak Hill, and when he became of age, established business for himself in Cooperstown, Otsego County. At Cherry Valley, in the same county, he married Mary Ann Boyle, and soon after moved to the northern wilderness and established a wool-carding and cloth-making business at Theresa. Nine children were born to him, seven sons and two daughters, of whom Roswell Pettibone Flower was the fourth son and the sixth child. Their father died when Roswell was only eight years old.

Their mother ran the business for a couple of years, and young Roswell was put to work at picking wool eight hours off and eight hours on daily, during the summer season, for a couple of months, and the rest of the time he was sent to school. The family had a farm of thirty acres near the village and another one of some 200 acres eight miles out. The children worked on these farms, chopping wood for the house in the village and

raising hay and oats, wheat and potatoes. There was nothing on the farm that young Roswell could not do. Until he was fourteen years of age he was occupied at school, and night and morning did what work he could to help support the family. His brothers being older than he, it was not Roswell's luck to have a new suit of clothes until he was able to earn the money himself. His mother would cut down the clothes of the elder boys to fit him, and stories are told, even in these days, up in Theresa, of the anguish of mind which young Flower suffered over this matter of hand-me-downs. His sister Caroline married a merchant of Theresa, Silas L. George, and Roswell was employed by him for five dollars a month and board.

In the winter he attended the Theresa high school and worked for his board until he was sixteen years of age, when he was graduated. To get his spending money Roswell did odd jobs of sawing wood and carrying it upstairs for the lawyers of the village. Twenty-five cents was a good deal of money in those days, and rather than ask his mother for the money, he preferred to saw half a cord of wood and carry it upstairs. Farm hands were scarce in haying time, and being a strong and active young man, he could command good wages, and frequently left the little country store for two or three weeks to help out some farmer who was anxious to get his crops in. He also worked in a brick-yard, driving a yoke of stags around the vat to tread out the clay, for which he received the munificent sum of one dollar and fifty cents a week.

After he was graduated from the high school he found an opportunity to teach in a little school a mile from town. The scholars in those days must first have a bout with their master before they would become tractable. Mr. Flower taught out the balance of the term in the red school-house below the village and "boarded around" among the parents or his scholars, a week or less in a place, in the regular old New England fashion, which still obtains in the way. back districts of Massachusetts and Vermont.

AS A VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER.

His first day in school, during the noon intermission, the biggest boy came to him for a "square-hold" wrestle. Mr. Flower accepted the challenge and easily threw the lad. After he had thrown all the larger boys he found them all, with one exception, ready to recognize his authority. One day in the spelling class, the story goes, this boy, who was about twenty-one years old, declined to pronounce his syllables, but after a tussle Roswell succeeded in making him pronounce them correctly. He then gave notice that he would hold a spelling school that evening, and stated that he desired only those of the scholars to come who would be willing to do their best. During the intermission this young man said he was coming to school that evening, but that he would not spell. Roswell was boarding at the time with the family of Edward Cooper, with whom lived a young man about twenty-two named James Casey. The young teacher talked over the expected trouble with Casey and arranged that Casey should choose for one side of the school, and if this obstreperous young man should make his appearance Casey should elect him to his side, and if he made any fuss in spelling the two should join forces and put him out. The evening school had not been opened more than ten minutes before this young man came in and sat down behind one of the old fashioned desks. He was immediately chosen, but said he would not spell. Then young Flower told him that he must spell or leave the school. He replied that he would be d- if he would spell and that he would be d- if he would leave the school. Mr. Flower insisted, which only called forth a repetition of the offensive remark. The schoolmaster then called upon anybody present who desired to resent the insult to the school and the teacher to assist him in putting the offender out of doors; whereupon young Casey rose up, and Roswell, grabbing the young man by his, shoulder and his assistant by his feet, he was speedily ejected. But the young man was not conquered. He went over to the hotel a few rods distant and persuaded one of the trustees and a big chap by the name of William Wafful to come over and whip the teacher. Nothing daunted, Roswell stated the case to his belligerent visitors and then said to the young man: "Now, sir, you must either spell or leave this school again." This conquered the youthful Samson and he spelled without further trouble. After school was out the colossal Mr. Wafful remarked that if this young man had not spelled then he would have whipped him himself.

Old Solon Comstock, soon after this experience, examined Mr. Flower in all the branches, which went to make up a complete English education in those days, and gave him a certificate that he was competent to teach a district school. Thirty years afterward Mr. Flower met this old gentleman, doubled up by rheumatism and with no apparent means of support, and, remembering how he had helped him on in the world, sent him a handsome check, with the request that if he needed more to let him know.

When he was in his eighteenth year Mr. Flower had an offer to go to Philadelphia as a clerk in a general

merchandise store. His employer was a Mr. Woodward, who failed two months afterward, and the young man, thrown out of employment, was forced to return to Theresa. That spring and summer he did work on his mother's farm, and earned a ton of hay by working nine days and a half in the field, mowing grass and "keeping up his end" with eleven men in mowing. During his boyhood he always went barefoot in the summer months, and he once remarked in a speech, while running against William Waldorf Astor for Congress, that until he was fifteen years old he did not feel at home in the summer time unless he had a stone bruise or two on his feet, and that he had warmed his feet many a morning in the crisp autumn weather on a spot where a cow had lain the night before.

SIX YEARS OF EARLY MANHOOD.

In August, 1853, Mr. Flower had an offer to go into the hardware store of Howell, Cooper & Co., at Watertown. After remaining there about a month he had another offer which was more to his liking and which he accepted. It was to become deputy postmaster at Watertown at fifty dollars a month and board. He occupied this position under Postmaster William H. Sigourney six years. The first fifty dollars he saved he invested in a gold watch, which he sold a few months later to a young physician, who was going west, for fifty-three dollars, and took his note for it. Mr. Flower still has that note. Mr. Flower managed to save some money out of his wages, and at the end of his term in office had accumulated about \$1,000 with which he purchased the interest of Mr. Sigourney in a jewelry business, the firm name being Hitchcock & Flower, at 1 Court street.

His aptitude for business enabled him to advance the interests of the firm, and in a couple of years he bought out his partner and continued alone in the business until 1869. In 1855 young Flower joined the Watertown fire department and served in its ranks for some years, when he retired and became a member of Exempt Company A. Mr. Flower was married on December 26, 1859 to Sarah M. Woodruff, a daughter of Norris M. Woodruff of Watertown. Three children were born to them, of whom only one is living, Emma Gertrude. She was married, to John B. Taylor of Watertown, January 2, 1890, and has a son. While in the Watertown postoffice Mr. Flower's spare time was consumed not in social entertainments, because he had no money to enter such society, but in reading whatever he thought might be useful to him in the future. He made himself thoroughly familiar with the "Federalist" and kindred works, and having an idea of some day becoming a lawyer he got a little knowledge of Blackstone and Kent; but his natural bent was for business and he never attempted the law.

BUSINESS IN NEW YORK.

In 1869 Henry Keep, the well-known capitalist, who had married Miss Emma Woodruff, a sister of Mrs. Flower, was on his deathbed. Two or three weeks before he died he sent for Mr. Flower to come to New York, and during his sickness gave him a pretty good idea of the character of the men with whom he had been surrounded in the business world. Mr. Keep had been president of the New York Central and treasurer of the Michigan Central and Lake Shore, and was president at the time of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad. He knew it would take a man of good common sense and quick perception to aid his wife in the management of his large property after his death, and in Mr. Flower he thought he recognized those qualities. In answer to a question by Mr. Flower, in order to get his opinion of Daniel Drew, as to whether Drew was an honest man, Mr. Keep, who was very reticent, did not reply for some ten minutes, and then said: "He is as honest a man as there is in the State of New York, but for fear that somebody else will cheat, he will always begin first."

Immediately after Mr. Keep's death Mr. Flower removed to New York and took charge of his late brother-in-law's estate, the value of which has more than doubled under his management. It was worth \$1,000,000 and now under Flower's management it has expanded to \$4,000,000. The properties in which the estate was invested caused Flower to be a frequent visitor to west, and since 1870 he has made extended trips all over the United States and has a personal knowledge of possibilities and natural resources of almost every section of the country. Governor Flower's fortune, which is estimated in the millions, has not been made by speculation in Wall street, but by shrewd purchasing of properties, which by careful and prudent management, have developed and proved valuable investments. Mr. Flower seldom gives advice, but on those rare occasions when he has those who have taken it will bear witness that he has been a sufferer with them if advised investments have not reached expectations. The reputation he has borne in the money center of the country is that of never advising a purchase unless willing himself to take a larger share than the one whom he has advised. He never unloads on his friends.

HIS CAREER ON WALL STREET.

In 1872 Mr. Flower was at death's door for several weeks, but after four or five month's sickness he finally recovered. His physicians then advised him to take all the outdoor exercise possible. At this time the brokerage and banking firm of Benedict, Flower & Co. was dissolved, and Mr. Flower gave his entire attention to the management of his sister-in-law's estate and other estates, which had been placed in his care. He found a New York office necessary, and so established himself at 84 Broadway. His younger brother, Anson R. Flower was brought down to New York from Watertown in order to become acquainted with the business, that he might take charge of it in Mr. Flower's absence; but strange to say, the more the latter to get out of business the more he got into it, and the firm of R. P. Flower & Co. found itself doing a large commission trade without any attempt having been made to push it - so large, in fact, that another brother, John D. Flower, and a nephew, Frederick S. Flower, were taken into the firm, and not until 1890 did Mr. Flower relinquish his interest in the concern and become a special partner. But in the meantime he had managed to get the "out of door" exercise, which the doctors had suggested through the State sportsman's clubs. In 1877 Mr. Flower attended the convention of these clubs at Syracuse and won a prize, consisting of a corduroy hunting, suit over a field of 113 entries. Thirty-two of them had tied at twenty-one yards rise, and they had to go back to the twenty-five-yard score. Then all that were left had to go back to thirty-one yards and shoot until somebody dropped out. Mr. Flower and ex-Attorney-General Tabor were the last competitors in the contest, and Mr. Flower finally won the clothes and still wears them on the hunting expeditions which lie frequently takes after woodcock, duck, and partridge.

ALWAYS ACTIVE IN POLITICS.

In politics Mr. Flower has always been a Democrat. He cast his first vote for Buchanan, and has been a constant and active worker for his party. He was chairman of the county committee for several years and helped to start the nucleus of an organization, which has been known throughout the State as one of the best equipped political organizations within its borders. Mr. Flower was an active Mason in his younger days, being at one time high priest of the Watertown chapter. One day, going down to the grand chapter at Albany, he met on the cars Samuel J. Tilden and his secretary, John D. Van Buren. Mr. Tilden asked him what he thought about the State, and Flower replied that he did not believe that Mr. Tilden would the next year be chairman of the State committee for the reason that he did not seem to recognize the fact that a man under 50 years of age had any influence in politics. He told Mr. Tilden that it was the young men who would control the party, and that he must extend his acquaintance among them or be prepared to step out. Mr. Tilden replied that he would like to have the young men with him, but that he had no opportunity of coming in touch with them; that his friends didn't seem to think it was worth while. Mr. Flower then told Tilden that Jefferson County had sent to Colonel Van Buren the year before the best scheme for organization of a party that had up to that time made its appearance, and that if he would organize the party throughout the State on the basis of recognizing the merit of young and active workers instead of the "has beens," he would be sure to carry the State at all times, and might continue at the head of the organization as long as he saw fit. Van Buren confirmed Flower's opinion. About a month later Allan C. Beach, of Watertown, received a telegram from Mr. Tilden asking him to come to his home and spend two or three weeks, as he wanted to extend the suggested organization throughout the State. It was thus that the famous "Tilden machine" was started. It was Flower's suggestion to organize it and Tilden's perseverance which extended it. In 1870 Flower was Chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee when the party won the campaign, though there was a bolt against the ticket.

A TERM IN CONGRESS.

After his son's death, in 1881, Mr. Flower was induced to run for Congress in the Eleventh Congressional district against William Waldorf Astor. The representative of this district had been Levi P. Morton until he resigned to take the position of minister to France. Mr. Morton had been elected by over 4,000 majority. In that campaign, after Orlando B. Potter had declined the Democratic nomination, Mr. Flower accepted it on the platform that he would not purchase a vote to secure the election, and on that he made the issue and was elected by 3,100 majority. In the Forty Seventh Congress he was appointed a member of the committee upon banking, and almost immediately took a prominent part in the discussion of financial questions. Mr. Flower recently said to the writer: "When I was elected to Congress, although I was pretty thoroughly conversant with practical banking methods, I knew nothing of the theories of finance, but I soon learned that if I was to be of any use in Congress I must do a little reading, and with the aid of books from the Congressional library I soon

pretty thoroughly mastered the subject. I found it much the most interesting that I had ever studied. It is better reading than the best novel that ever was written." During his first term in Congress he also made speeches on the Chinese question, on the river and harbor bill, and a notable one on the reduction of taxes.

A UNIQUE POCKET COMPANION.

Mr. Flower would hardly be called a good speaker, but he was called on frequently in his county to talk from the platform, particularly during the Seymour and Blair campaign of 1868. Endeavoring to fill that want of many public speakers, the possession of the copy of the constitution of the United States in convenient size to carry in his pocket, he searched the bookstores of Watertown, but was unable to find one. Happening into a little corner shoe store he saw tacked to the bench of a grizzled old cobbler a little primer containing inside the constitution and outside the advertisement of a fire insurance company. James Muldoon, the shoemaker, gave Mr. Flower the book, and he has it yet, always carrying it in his pocket for easy reference. In 1876, when visiting Chicago, Mr. Flower had his memorandum book stolen, which contained the present of the cobbler. While in Europe some months later he received a note from the proprietor of the Grand Pacific hotel, saying that his book had been found in a lumber yard, and would be returned to him. The constitution turned up inside in perfect order, and in 1883, when making a speech in Congress on giving power to the president to veto separate items in the appropriation bill, Mr. Flower produced the cobbler's copy of the constitution, and, considering its adventures and the value a pamphlet copy would be to many persons as it had been to him, he asked that it, together with the substantial amendments, be printed in the Record to accompany his remarks, that with them it might be distributed to the people. Over 500,000 Copies of this somewhat unique document were circulated by himself and other members of Congress.

A GUBERNATORIAL POSSIBILITY AND ALREADY A NATIONAL LEADER.

In 1882 there Was a general demand throughout the State for his nomination to the office of Governor. In the Democratic convention Mr. Flower received 183 votes against the Same number for General Slocum, and sixty-one for Grover Cleveland of Buffalo. The strife between Tammany and the County Democracy was so great at that time that it was thought better politics to nominate a man outside of the city of New York. Consequently, Mr. Flower made way for Cleveland, who was declared the choice of the convention. In this same year, 1882, Mr. Flower refused a renomination for Congress, having stated in his first Canvass that he would not accept a second nomination and that he would leave the district in such a condition after one term that any good Democrat, no matter how shallow his pocket, might be nominated and elected in it. He was at this time offered the unanimous nomination of both factions of his party, and was assured that the Republicans would make no nomination if he would consent to run, but he preferred to carry out his pledge to the people when he ran against Mr. Astor. Orlando B. Potter was nominated and elected in his place, Mr. Flower taking the stump for him. Mr. Flower has been a member of the State executive committee every year since that time, and has given valuable aid to the Democratic party managers. In 1885 Mr. Flower attended the Democratic State convention as a looker-on; not as a candidate for office. The convention nominated David B. Hill for Governor. Several delegates had asked Mr. Flower to accept the nomination for Lieutenant Governor, but he refused. He left Saratoga the morning before the convention adjourned, but when he arrived at his country home in Watertown he found that he had been unanimously nominated for Lieutenant Governor. He immediately declined the honor, stating his reasons for doing so. The State committee was called together, and nominated in his place Col. Jones, of Binghamton; he who "pays the freight."

Mr. Flower, in 1882, was made chairman of the Democratic Congressional Committee, and ran the campaign that year that resulted in a majority in the house of fifty for his party. In the presidential campaign of 1888 Mr. Flower was selected as one of the four delegates-at-large to the National Democratic Convention at St. Louis, which nominated Mr. Cleveland for President, and was chosen chairman of the delegation. In the same year, when it seemed probable that the two Democratic factions in the Twelfth district might each run a candidate for Congress, they united on Mr. Flower, and asked him to accept the nomination. This he did, with some hesitation, and only in order to help the election of the presidential and gubernatorial nominees.

AGAIN IN CONGRESS.

In the Fifty-first Congress Flower was appointed a member of the house committee on ways and means, and also a member of the committee on the world's fair. His efforts toward securing the location of the fair in New York have been recognized by the city and State, and his speech on that subject contained about all the points in favor of New York that could be put into thirty minutes. In the running debate on this question, when Congressman Springer challenged the validity of the \$10,000,000 bonds about to be issued, Mr. Flower,

in order to show his earnestness in the matter, said that he would take all the bonds at par, paying the city cash for them.

Mr. Flower once remarked to the writer that his success in Congress was chiefly due to the fact that on whatever committees he was placed he tried to learn as much about his work if not more than any other member of the committee. On the ways and means committee in the Fifty First Congress, by the questions he asked at the hearing held before that committee, he showed his familiarity with many subjects, and with distant sections of the country and their industries. He was an earnest advocate of the Mills bill, and strenuously opposed the McKinley tariff. His intimate knowledge of the subject was particularly shown in his cross examination of the committee which appeared before the ways and means committee determined to have the duty on oranges and lemons raised three times higher than it was. His cross-examination of the Farmers' Alliance enthusiasts, who appeared in behalf of the scheme for building subtreasuries throughout the country to make the Federal government a pawn-shop for the loan of money upon crops, created widespread interest.

He did not forget the post-office clerks while in Congress, and favored a bill giving them fifteen days' leave of absence each year, and also offered an amendment for the eight hour claims bill to include post-office employees. There was no just claim before Congress for the pension of a union soldier that he did not champion, believing that if a soldier received a pension to which he was not entitled the government was to blame and not the soldier, for there are in each Congressional district three surgeons by whom the soldier is examined before he is allowed a pension. Mr. Flower also made a strong speech in the Fifty First Congress in favor of the election of postmasters by the people, and offered an amendment to the Constitution to that effect. Because of his thorough knowledge of the west and its needs he was enabled to make in Congress a speech on the irrigation question, which attracted a great deal of attention, and which was made the basis of the Senate committee's report on that subject.

THE CANVASS OF 1890.

Mr. Flower was chairman of the Democratic Congressional campaign committee in 1890. The committee had very small means, but his organizing powers were brought into play with great success. The campaign was quietly but systematically conducted. Campaign documents were circulated in large numbers, and the result was the largest Democratic Congressional majority ever obtained in an election in the United States. Mr. Flower created the impression that he was doing nothing, even counseling some of the leading newspapers of his party to pitch into him and accuse him of inaction, in order to arouse the Democratic rank and file to the necessity for active effort on their part. He believed that a full vote of his party meant a great Democratic triumph, and the outcome justified his belief. Mr. Flower was nominated for Governor at the Democratic State Convention of 1892 and was elected by a plurality of 47,937 over Jacob Sloat Fassett, the Republican candidate.

THE STURDY COMMISSIONER COMES IN COLLISION WITH JAY GOULD.

As an instance of Mr. Flower's independence of spirit and fearlessness of action in what he considers to be his duty the following story is apropos: The subway commission of New York had been organized a year when Charles E. Loew, its president, died. Governor Hill offered Mr. Flower the appointment, which he accepted upon the single condition that after the work had been well started he should be permitted to resign. Mr. Flower visited the chief cities of the country, including Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia, investigating the systems by which the cities were operating underground wires. In his subsequent report he took the ground that the subway did not need the services of any of the 440 patent right men who were clamoring for the adoption of their several systems of subways; that electric-light, telephone or telegraph wires, if properly insulated and protected, needed only mechanical appliances to keep the water away from them and to avert danger from pick and shovel, and that, therefore, it did not matter whether they were laid in asphalt, wood, or other material so long as they should be protected from the elements and against molestation. The report was adopted by the board, and two miles of the subway was built in Sixth Avenue under his direction. The fight between the Western Union and Bell telephone was practically ended, and when the Western Union applied to the board for a subway to run from the Western Union building to the Brooklyn bridge, and said that it was willing to comply with the law, Mr. Flower at once tendered his resignation to the Governor.

Jay Gould came into Mr. Flower's office one day and said: "Mr. Flower, there was a great deal of dispute as to whether or not this law is constitutional or not. My lawyers think it is not; so if you will let your lawyer make out a brief I will have mine do the same, and we will submit the question to Judge Blatchford, get his

opinion and have it settled." Mr. Flower answered: "Mr. Gould, your company has been laying cables under the Third avenue elevated railroad without a permit from the board of subway commissioners. I am not so much concerned about the constitutionality of this law as I am in fixing the responsibility of the party who ordered them to lay that cable on a Sunday. If I can find out I shall proceed against him for disobeying the law, and if I find that you ordered it would give me great pleasure to land you in jail."

Mr. Gould then remarked that the Western Union had no money to build subways. Mr. Flower at this expressed his belief that when the Western Union was once underground in the subway with cables, the expense of keeping it in repair in New York city would be about one fifth of its former cost, and if Mr. Gould's company did not have money he knew that his bankers would jump at the chance of starting a company to manufacture cables and to rent them to the Western Union. Before the conversation ended Mr. Gould requested Mr. Flower to send his lawyer to the Western Union office saying that he had no doubt they could agree upon a form of letter by which he might ask the board of subway commissioners for a permit to hang the cables under the Third avenue elevated. This was afterward done and the form of letter agreed upon.

HOW HE SPENDS HIS MONEY.

Mr. Flower has never turned his back on any charitable institution that he could consistently befriend, as the people of the northern portion of the State can testify. He has always made it a rule to give away in charity a certain portion of his income for many years all that he did not need for his own living expenses believing that when a man had wealth he should distribute it while he is alive in order that there be no contest over it when he dies.

Mr. Flower's parents were Presbyterians, and on a visit to Theresa a number of years ago he found that the church, which he had attended as a small boy had run down and that the building itself was in a dilapidated condition. At considerable expense he had the church rebuilt and it is now a beautiful little structure - a fitting memorial to Mr. Flower's parents. On the death of his son, Henry Keep Flower, in 1881, Mr. and Mrs. Flower gave St. Thomas' church in New York City, of which Mr. Flower is a vestryman, \$50,000 to erect on Fifty-Ninth and Sixtieth streets and Second Avenue a four-story building, to be known as St. Thomas' house, to be used for parish work. The structure has rooms occupied by an American Sunday school of 500 children, a German Sunday school, and a Chinese Sunday school. On the lower floor is a diet kitchen and on the second floor an institution to teach young girls how to sew and mend. The next floor is a clubroom, where the boys play checkers and backgammon, and on the upper floor is found a library for a club of young men. All these institutions are carried on by the charitably disposed in St. Thomas' church. On the inside of the building on the wall is a marble slab, upon which is inscribed: "Erected to God by Roswell P. Flower and Sarah M. Flower, in memory of their son, Henry Keep Flower."

Mr. Flower's brother, Anson, is a vestryman in Trinity church in Watertown, and Mr. Flower joined him in building a \$100,000 home for that parish. The homoeopathic school of physicians in New York city were erecting, a few years ago, a college, but had no hospital in which to teach young students anatomy and the use of the knife in practical surgery. Mr. Flower erected for them, at the corner of Avenue A and Sixty Third street, the Flower hospital, which supplies this need. But this by no means completes the list of beneficences of the family. Henry Keep's widow has erected at a cost of \$100,000 in the suburbs of Watertown, a home for old men and women called "the Henry Keep Home." As Mr. Flower truly says: "What better use could be made of the money of Henry Keep, whose father died in a poor-house, than to erect, with some of it, a home for aged men and women." Henry Keep's widow has also given \$100,000 for the Ophthalmic hospital at Twenty-third street and Fourth avenue, New York.

THE WATERTOWN RESIDENCE.

Although Mr. Flower has for some twenty years had a winter home in Fifth avenue, New York, he still spends his summers in Watertown, where upon Arsenal street, he occupies a cozy, pretty house. There are fifty dwellings in Watertown surpassing, it in splendor of appearance, more modern, with a greater evidence of the luxuries of life, but none having more the look of a real home. The house was built over fifty years ago and has the rambling, comfortable look of that period in architecture. It is a wooden building painted white - a cleanly, dazzling white which seems to have been so attractive in the eyes of the last generation and it has the usual accompaniment of bright green blinds. There is a main building of two stories with a sharp, pitched roof, its facade plain, but with timbers in relief, carved in the colonial style, and a big front door, with a big

brass knocker, and an immaculate stoop of somewhat elaborated design. From this main building have branched off wings of one story in height, with an abundance of big, generous windows and wide piazzas. The house stands quite close to the street, but there is a sufficient space between it and the street for some handsome beds of flowers and a perfectly trimmed green lawn, while back of the house one sees a fine garden and clumps of handsome trees. Mr. Flower has gathered in his Watertown library the many valuable documents that lie collected while a Congressman. He has, among other things, every message that has been sent by a President to Congress since Washington's day, and there are very few of them with which he is unfamiliar.

HIS LIFE IN ALBANY.

Since its occupancy by the Governor and Mrs. Flower the Executive Mansion has undergone a Complete transformation. Both Cleveland and Hill were bachelor Governors, so that there had been no woman at the head of the establishment since the Cornell administration. Mrs. Flower brought her own pictures, added materially to the other furnishings, and gave to the big house an attractive, home like air which it has never known until now. The Governor remained at home until office hours, when he went to the Executive Chamber, never, by the way, using the Governor's private staircase, but going up one of the elevators like any ordinary citizen. His business affairs were attended to in New York, where he had able assistance, and they did not take up much of his time in Albany. The callers whom he saw were comparatively very few, as they were carefully sifted before they were admitted to him. Those whom he did see were men of importance, who attended to their business promptly. The office hours were only five, and one of them he took to go to the Executive Mansion for luncheon. Mr. Flower likes good cigars and kept several boxes in the Executive Chamber and at the Executive Mansion; but, like the good business man that he is, he neither smoked himself nor permitted smoking about him during office hours. He considers himself a good judge of wine and usually takes it with his dinner. Besides smoking, he has the Jefferson county habit of chewing, though the habit is not marked and one might know him for some time without noticing it.

HIS DEATH ON LONG ISLAND

Excerpted from the Watertown Daily Times - May 13, 1899 - Staff Writer

Watertown's Most Respected Citizen Passed Away

The End Came Last Night at Long Island Clubhouse, Eastport, Long Island

Heart Failure the Cause.

The City of Watertown, the State and the Nation Shocked and Saddened by the News of This Death.

The city of Watertown, the city of New York, the state and the nation were shocked this morning to learn of the sudden death of ex-Governor Roswell Pettibone Flower. He was in the full maturity of his Powers. But few men in the nation filled a larger place in its active business operations. His hand touched upon many and varied industries, not only in the state of New York, but in almost every state in the Union. His sudden death will have an important effect upon great business interests, but the strength of the business, house with which he was connected, its well known conservatism in business, will quickly respond to protect the great business interests with which he was at the time of his death so intimately connected. It is not the business affairs alone that are shocked at the sudden death of ex-Governor Flower, but every good work, every enterprise for the uplifting and betterment of his fellow citizens, the great institutions of learning within this state, will all feel his loss as of a beneficiary of the largest benevolence. Especially Cornell University will feel his loss as the President of its board of trustees, and Hamilton college cannot but appreciate his value, which institution was but recently the recipient of his thoughtful benevolence. The institutions for the relief of suffering and for charity, especially in the city of Watertown, will feel his loss to be irreparable. Institutional religion, in its broadest sense with but little limitation by reason of denominational differences, will feel that the hand that has for years relieved it in its financial distresses, is closed to it forever. Every good work, every aspiration in the heart of every good man or woman for the betterment of the condition of people, all these will feel that they have lost a friend indeed in the active work for the good of the people. The political life of the state and nation in his death lose a personal inspiration to patriotism and to such personal sacrifice as few men would make for the upholding of the credit and financial honor of the nation. But the lives of few men in America reached out and intimately affected so many great interests as the life of ex-Governor Roswell P Flower.

Taken Suddenly Ill After Luncheon and Except During a Few Short Intervals Was Unconscious Until His Death. Mr. Flower died of heart failure at 10:30 o'clock last night at the Long Island clubhouse, Eastport, L. I. Overwork, due to the tremendous mental activity necessary in attending to his great financial interests, is

believed to have super-induced the illness which proved fatal. He became ill suddenly after luncheon and was unconscious except during a few short intervals until his death. His wife, two of his nephews, Frederick S. Flower and Nathan N. Flower, his family physician, Dr. Allen, and a trained nurse, all of whom went from New York, to Eastport on a special train as soon as the serious nature of his illness was announced to them by telegraph, were at his bedside during the last hours. It was supposed at first that the great financier had been attacked simply by indigestion, but a few minutes after he complained that he felt ill, the symptoms became acute and unconsciousness soon followed. A local physician, who had been summoned, arrived soon after Mr. Flower was attacked. Restoratives were applied. Mr. Flower rallied very quickly and for a time recognized those about him. Improvement continued, and for a time it was hoped that the grave symptoms would not return. Mrs. Flower, Dr. Allen, the family physician, and other relatives had already been summoned from New York by telegraph, and were soon on their way. Before they arrived, however, the patient sank into a lethargic condition, which was soon followed by complete insensibility. Except for occasional rallies he, remained unconscious thereafter until the end came at 10: 30, but he was able at one time to recognize Mrs. Flower and his nephews. The immediate cause of death according to Frederick S. Flower, was heart failure. The attack which led to it was no doubt super-induced by tremendous strain to which Mr. Flower's immense activity in financial activities had subjected him to of late.

Flower and several friends had gone to Eastport to enjoy some salt water fishing and although, the former governor appeared to be in good heal when he reached the club house, if is known that the visit to Eastport was planned in order to afford him a much needed brief rest from the tremendous demands of his business, which of late had made him at once one of the giants and one of the most overworked men in New York. Indeed, he was scarcely aware how much he was in need of relief. It is said that Mr. Flower had been troubled with indigestion for sometime past and that his short vacation of the fishing trip was largely to effect a relief.

The story goes that he obtained relief and became rather careless in eating. The matter was kept very quiet yesterday morning and it was not until evening that it became known that Mr. Flower was ill. The first report which obtained circulation in New York gave the case as being one-of apoplexy, but at the club house this was emphatically denied. The interment will be in the family plot at Brookside Cemetery in Watertown, New York.(3)

1) The Centennial History of Jefferson County New York - 1894, A Biographical Sketch of Roswell P. Flower, by John Haddock, Sherman & Company, Philadelphia, PA

2) The Presidential Favorites - 1884, A Biographical Sketch of Roswell P. Flower, by Benjamin F. Babcock, Babcock, Fort & Company, Chicago, Ill.

3) Watertown Daily Times - May 13, 1899, Obituary, by a Staff Writer

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